



Dear parent / carer,

RE: COVID-19 PHASED RETURN TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

I hope you and your family are safe and well. It has been a strange summer, however, I hope you and your family were able to enjoy some of the glorious weather and had the opportunity for some quality family time together.

As we prepare for the new academic year we continue to work closely with our Trust (Thinking Schools Academy Trust) and to follow the Government advice to ensure we give the safest welcome for our students.

The Government's guidance for opening to all Year groups from September is the cornerstone to our plans and we have been working around the clock to reflect this and ensure a safe welcome back for all children in the new academic year.

We are now in a position to be able to share a summary of the principles for opening to all children in September.



In addition to this letter, the information [here](#) will help you understand how the return-to-school based learning will happen and answer questions you may have.

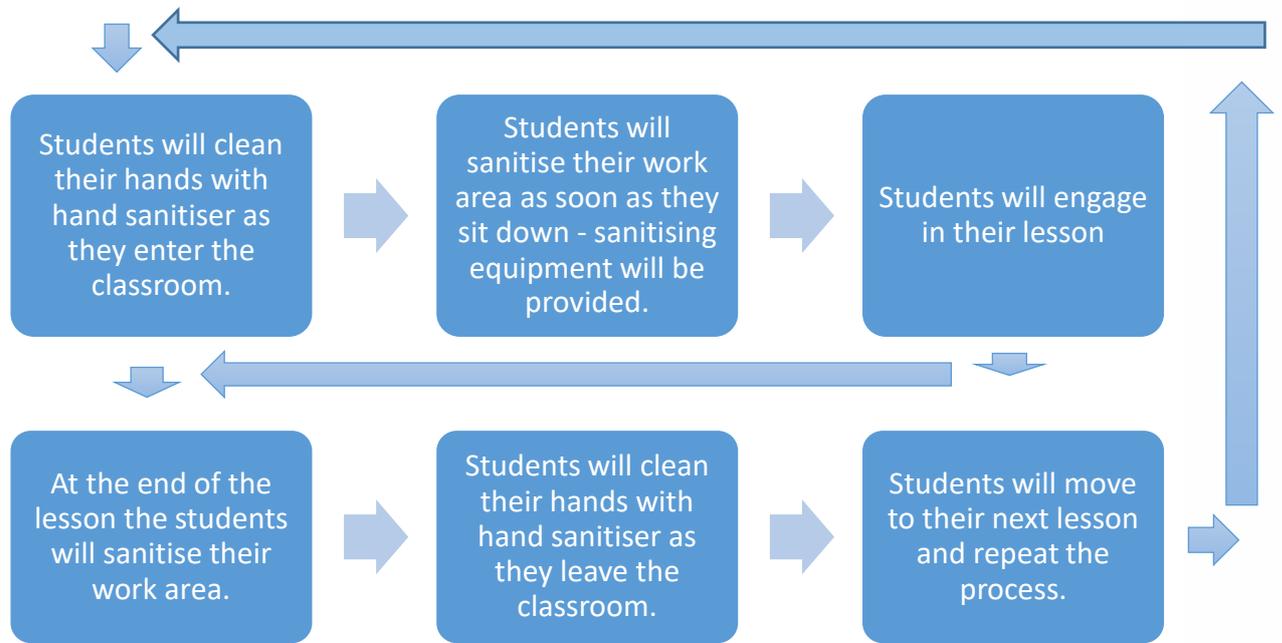
We will be continuing to work to our mission of Child First = Child Safe = Adult Safe. This has guided our planning since lockdown and we are pleased with how well it translated to everyone in our school community.

How we achieve 'Child Safe'

At the heart of our strategy to keep everyone safe will be the Year Group Bubble. Each child will be part of a consistent bubble made up of their year group with NO mixing between these bubbles in the classroom. To help manage the Year Group Bubbles we are introducing additional measures that will allow students to move between lessons



from safe space to safe space throughout the day within their bubbles – this will be achieved through the new method of ‘Clean, Use, Clean’:



Teachers will be, where appropriate, situated as they would have been pre-Covid-19, in a base classroom with limited movement between classes during the school day. The reason we have taken this approach is to enable us to safely deliver as much of the curriculum as possible to our students including the use of specialist facilities such as Science labs, DT workshops, Computer suites and Art rooms.

I have outlined below the top five considerations and principles that will be in operation in time for all of our students returning.



1. MANAGING SICKNESS AND REPORTING

Please remember that you must not send your child to school if they are unwell or displaying any symptoms of Covid-19.

- New continuous cough.
- High temperature.
- Loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

We are going beyond the Government advice regarding Track & Trace to ensure the highest safety for our community. Therefore, any member of our school community that is displaying symptoms must self-isolate and be tested.

In the event of a positive test result, we will inform Public Health England (PHE) and require all students identified as being within prolonged close proximity to the infected person to isolate for 14 days.



2. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE START OF TERM

We will provide a full time education provision for all children five days a week. The Government expect all children to return in September and we have planned carefully to ensure that we are able to welcome them all back safely.

To support our children and families to return to school we are operating a staggered return to start the new academic

year.



These Year group bubbles will return on the following days:

Date	Year Groups in school
Monday 7 th September	Years 7 and 12
Tuesday 8 th September	Years 7, 11, 12 and 13
Wednesday 9 th September	Years 7,9,11, 12 and 13
Thursday 10 th September	All students in all year groups
Friday 11 th September	All students in all year groups

TRAVELLING TO AND FROM SCHOOL: As far as possible we would ask all students to walk or cycle to school. Bicycles can be chained to the railings at the front of the main school building. Where this is not possible students should abide by the government guidance on public transport. This guidance can be found here.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>



3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SCHOOL DAY

LESSONS: To reduce movement of students around the school we will be operating a three-lesson school day.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE: To support social distancing, students must enter and leave the school grounds through the entry / exit points outlined below:

Year	Entry / Exit point	Time
7	Entrance on Walderslade Road	8:30-8:45
8	Entrance on Walderslade Road	8:30-8:45
9	Entrance on Maidstone Road	8:30-8:45
10	Entrance on Maidstone Road	8:30-8:45
11	Entrance on Letchworth Ave	8:30-8:45
12	Entrance on Letchworth Ave	8:30-8:45
13	Entrance on Letchworth Ave	8:30-8:45



As far as is possible students should not be on site before 8:30 as they will not be allowed into the buildings until that time. From 8:30 they should arrive on site and go straight to their lesson 1 classroom. Registration is at 8:45 and anyone arriving after 8:45 will be marked as late. On the first day students will be met and shown where to go.

LOCKERS: To minimise the spread of germs, lockers will be out of bounds in communal areas and students will need to carry their belongings between lessons. If your child needs to retrieve anything from their lockers left over from last year, this will need to be done by the end of the first week of term.

LARGE GATHERINGS: Please note that we will be avoiding large gatherings and all assemblies will be taking place virtually throughout the Autumn Term to ensure safety.

BREAK/LUNCHTIMES: Break and lunchtimes will be staggered so that the Year Group Bubbles do not mix. Please provide your child with a healthy break snack as usual. We will be offering a hot meal option as usual, alternatively please provide your child with a healthy packed lunch.

There will be a NO CASH system in place, so use of the online payments system is essential to top-up student accounts. NOTE: For Y7 students who may not have been enrolled on the system as yet, the overdraft facility will be enabled. Please contact us for further information.

PE LESSONS: Practical PE lessons will be provided in most cases but students will not be required to wear their full PE kit for lessons. Students will only be asked to remove their blazer and tie and to change into trainers or studded boots for the lesson. The curriculum plan has been duly amended so the activities that students undertake are suitable to their attire. Equipment use will be kept to a minimum, however where equipment is required for the activity it will be thoroughly cleaned after each use and/or quarantined for 72 hours after use.

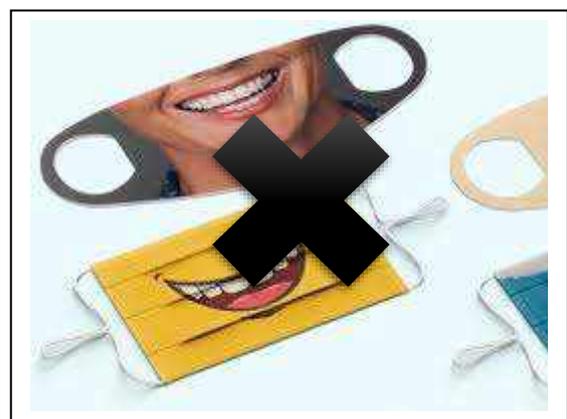
FACE COVERINGS: The use of face coverings will be optional, if students wish to wear them.

What face covering is permitted?

- **Students are only permitted to wear a plain single colour “face covering”** which covers the mouth and nose held in place by straps around the ears. See example below:



- Patterned or adorned “face covering” are NOT permitted.





- No other type of face covering (e.g. scarf or bandana) is permitted.

What will happen if a student wears a face covering that is not permitted?

- Students will be required to remove the face covering. It will be handed in to student services and returned to them at the end of the day.
- Students who repeatedly are found to be wearing non-permitted face coverings in school will be subject to the school's behaviour policy for failure to comply with instructions.

Looking after your face covering:

- Students are expected to look after their own face covering and follow [government guidance](#) on wearing their face covering.
- Whenever a student takes off their face covering it must be safely put away or disposed of in a lidded bin.



4. SCHOOL RULES

We expect our students to return in full school uniform. Wearing the correct uniform is important to our identity, and school community and we recognise the importance of establishing our school as a family of learners together and uniform is integral to this.

All normal school rules will apply as well as additional expectations around behaviour in corridors and the maintenance of social distancing – these are shown on additional signage throughout the school. If students choose to ignore these expectations then the school will apply the normal range of sanctions.



STATIONERY: We encourage students to bring in their own stationery in a plastic based pencil case.



5. SAFETY AND CLEANING

Ensuring that our school is kept clean is a key part of our plan. This means regular cleaning of all shared spaces including classrooms, corridors, IT suites and toilets. We will put in place a “cleaning habit routine” at the start and end of every lesson in every classroom that is being used.

Hand sanitiser will be the principle means of securing hand hygiene and will be easily accessible across school grounds.

As a result of these measures we believe we will be able to provide a safe learning environment for your children and we look forward to welcoming them all back in September.

To keep our site as safe and clean as we can we will only be allowing essential visitors to come on to site during the school day. Therefore most communications between school and parents will need to be either by telephone or via email. Please help us by understanding that we will only be able to meet with you in person in emergencies.

FINAL NOTE...

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our children, parents/carers, staff and governors for their support over the last term and indeed, since the pandemic impacted on our usual ways of teaching and learning.

Together we have overcome some great challenges and we are proud of what we have achieved. Should there be any further changes to the Government guidance before we return, or during the new academic year we will respond as fast and as best we can.



However in the meantime, I would like to thank you again and I hope you have found this update useful. Further information will be published on the school site as and when it occurs.

Yours sincerely,

Mr L.Preston
Principal
Holcombe Grammar School